

securing this armistice Napoleon hoped that happy chances might arise, and that intrigues might be set on foot; but the Allies would not listen to any such proposition.

At the sitting of the 10th of March the Duke of Vicenza inserted in the protocol that the last courier he had received had been arrested and detained a considerable time by several Russian general officers, who had obliged him to deliver up his despatches, which had not been returned to him till thirty-six hours after at Chaumont. Caulaincourt justly complained of this infraction of the law of nations and established usage, which, he said, was the sole cause of the delay in bringing the negotiations to a conclusion. After this complaint he communicated to the Congress the ostensible instructions of Napoleon, in which he authorized his Minister to accede to the demands of the Allies. But in making this communication M. de Caulaincourt took care not to explain the private and secret instructions he had also received. The Allies rejected the armistice because it would have checked their victorious advance; but they consented to sign the definitive peace, which of all things was what the Emperor did not wish.

Napoleon at length determined to make sacrifices, and the Duke of Vicenza submitted new propositions to the Congress. The Allies replied, in the same sitting, that these propositions contained no distinct and explicit declaration on the project presented by them on the 17th of February; that, having on the 28th of the same month demanded a decisive answer within the term of ten days, they were about to break up the negotiations. Caulaincourt then declared verbally : —

1st. That the Emperor Napoleon was ready to renounce all pretension or influence whatever in countries beyond the boundaries of France.

2d. To recognize the independence of Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland, and that as to England, France would make such concessions as might be deemed necessary in consideration of a reasonable equivalent.

Upon this the sitting was immediately broken up without a reply. It must be remarked that this singular declaration •was verbal, and consequently not binding, and that the limits